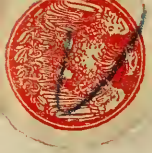

Mayflowers to Mistletoe

Day

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Mayflowers to Mistletoe

A Year with the Flower Folk

By

Sarah J. Day

Second Edition

Illustrated by

Zulma de L. Steele

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
New York and London
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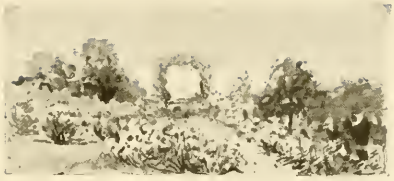

IN all those walks through garden, wood, and field
Wherein my much delight is, I have found
The flowers my choicest comrades ; and around
The sprightly ways and wiles they ne'er concealed
From me, assurèd of my sympathies,
Fancy has woven the gentle histories
Herein, for those who love such lore, revealed.

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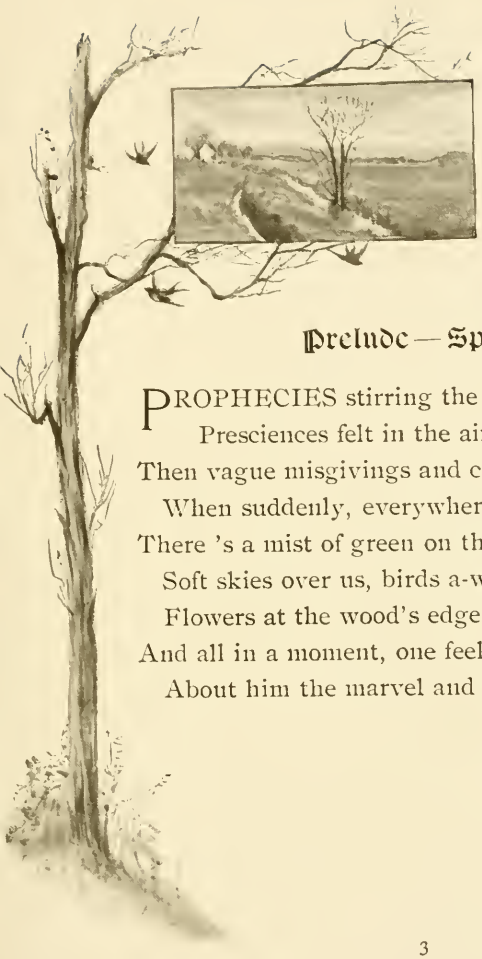
A Year with the Flower Folk



Prelude — Spring

PROPHECIES stirring the wood,
Presciences felt in the air,
Then vague misgivings and chilling mood ;
When suddenly, everywhere
There 's a mist of green on the trees,
Soft skies over us, birds a-wing,
Flowers at the wood's edge blossoming,
And all in a moment, one feels and sees
About him the marvel and rapture of spring.

Hepatica

ONE frosty day in March I strayed
Along a woodland path I knew,
And there I met a little maid
With shyest, starry eyes of blue.

Her ample cloak was lined with fur,
Her grey-green tippet furry too ;
" The wind is cold," I said to her ;
Said she, " It may be, sir, for *you*."

Mayflowers

IN their last year's leaves cradled as if on the arm
Of their granddame, beneath the dry fir
And pine needles, the Mayflowers wake rosy and warm,
Cuddling close as they sleepily stir.

For the ground is still frosty, the air is still bleak,
And a granddame's fond kindness well known;
So they press very softly her withered brown cheek
'Gainst the pink and white down of their own.

Wake-Robin

WAKE, robin, wake ! the spring is here,
Behold the signal given:
My petals fair in threes I bear,
Three ways their golden star 's aflare,
Thrice is my broad leaf riven.

Wake, robin, wake! and sing us cheer,
Freed from our long subjection ;
The cold earth spread above our head,
They mourned for us as for the dead,
Sing thou our resurrection.

Wake, robin, wake! no need to fear
Dull skies or snows hereafter ;
The covering clods we bravely break
To greet the sun ; wake, robin, wake !
And voice the triple sign I make—
Life, loveliness, and laughter.

Crocus

THE Crocus had slept in his little round house
So soundly the whole winter through ;
There came a tap-tapping,—'t was Spring at the door :
" Up ! up ! we are waiting for you ! "

The Crocus peeped out from his little brown house
And nodded his gay little head;
" Good-morning, Miss Snowdrop ! and how do you do
This fine, chilly morning ? " he said.

Ground Pink

WHERE lately lay the snow
Young Spring doth blithely go,
Her garments wafting sweet perfume.
And lo,
There springeth bloom
Amid the grass,
Soon as her rosy foot doth pass.

In glowing tints of red,
Where chanced that she did tread,
These tender tufts through wood and hill
Are spread;
And, lingering still,
The fragrance sweet
Her lovely presence left in its retreat.

Tulips

THRONGING through the mellow mould,
When the frost has loosed its hold,

Tiny Sheiks of haughty mien
Stand in Orient pomp and sheen,

Bringing from their lord the Sun
Tidings of his course begun ;

Telling of his royal pleasure
Toward us soon his steps to measure.

Richly stiff the robes of state
Swathed about their forms elate,

Gorgeously the turbaned heads
Glow with mingled golds and reds.

From of old they know their worth,
These proud blooms of Eastern birth ;

Know their sires were often sold
Far above their weight in gold ;

Know—and who shall check their pride—
Princes oft for them have vied.

Fitting heralds these to bring
Greetings from the Sun their King !

Daffodil

DAFFYDOWNDILLY, the maid in the garden,
The child at the wicket is looking for you.
Bare are the meadows, unbudded the thicket,
April still mingles the clouds with her blue ;
Come to us, Daffodil, golden and true !

Daffydowndilly, I mind an old legend—
Was it your brother Narcissus, or you,
Loved but himself and had ne'er loved another,
Adroop o'er the river his image to view ?
Must we, fair Daffodil, search there for you ?

Nay, our gay Daffydowndilly advancing—
The truant — with dancing, ne'er languishing knew ;
Dwells but in gardens, and makes them entrancing,
Sunnily smiling and nodding at you,
Whole-hearted Daffodil, merry and true !

Jack-in-the-Pulpit

SAID Jack the Parson, "Firstly,
Dear brethren, I aver"
(As yet 't was early April
And few the flowers astir)
"That Promptness is a virtue
I 'd fain on you confer.

"But, secondly," he added,
"Lest frowardness beguile,"
(A sudden, biting snow-squall
Had swept the forest aisle),
"Upon the claims of Prudence
'T were well to pause awhile.

"Then, thirdly,"— from his pulpit
He peered (on every side,
Upsprung at last, the blossoms

In gayest colours vied),—
" I feel that I must warn you
Against the sin of Pride.

" And, lastly, Praise is comely
And you may well desire "
(For now the woods were vocal
Through chancel, nave, and spire)
" To have my discourse ended
And listen to the choir."

May-Apples

IF you scan the wooded open
Where some western hill-road crawls,
You will spy the green umbrellas
Of the apple-women's stalls.

In a colony they cluster ;
Peep beneath the spreading flaps,—
If you see the little women
Nodding, in their snowy caps,

You will know that you are early,
Not yet open is the stand ;
Come in two months' time—you 'll find them
With a stock of fruit on hand.

Horse-Chestnut

SNOWS gone and winter over—
How is it that we see
Amid the bees and clover
A mammoth Christmas tree?

Its great cone-tapers thickly
Are set from bough to bough
All straight and white, as quickly
To be enkindled now.

Soon will the bees discover
They may not lighted be,
And rifle — Christmas over,
Snows gone—the idle tree.

Wistaria

A WEB of green with purple blooms
Betasselled, drapes my arbour's frame
Like some rare product of the looms
In the rich East from whence it came.

From arch to arch its folds are flung,
From prop to prop its clusters droop ;
And, as at princely portals hung,
Whence lovely pageants soon shall troop,

Its stirring wafts sweet odours through ;
And then it seems that one might swing
The shimmering green and pendulous blue
Apart, and view the hosts of Spring.

Dandelion

'T IS "*youth for war*," O hearts of gold,
And early ye the fields assail,
Encamped in squadrons, warriors bold,
Resolved for Spring the land to hold,
Each crouched upon his lion's mail.

"*Old men for counsel*,"—so we find
In Summer's senate halls ye stand
In thronging groups of stately kind,
Each snowy head to head inclined
And wafting wisdom o'er the land.

Spring-Beauties

PRETTY maidens, white and pink,
Blithely arm in arm they link,
Swaying to a measure slow,
Where the zephyrs softliest blow
'Neath the budding forest tree ;
Such a dainty company,
Young and flushed and fair to see !

But the pink and white will pale,
White and pink were ever frail—
Scarcely worth the gathering ;
E'er the vanishing of spring
Beauty will have ceased to be
In that faded company
'Neath the full-leaved forest tree.

Violet

SHY little nun of the wood,
Kneeling apart at prayer
Hid in the folds of your purple hood,—
How do I know you are there?

Straight to your low green cell
The odour of incense leads;
And softly I step, for I know full well
Sister Violet 's telling her beads.

Columbine

COLUMBINE is dancing,
Lithesome, blithesome maid,
Where the sun is glancing
Through the wood's new shade,
On her rocky ledges,
Lilting at their edges
In a pose entrancing,
Gayly unafraid.

Columbine's arraying
Bordered is with bells,
Softly round her swaying
Their many-clappered cells
Coral-hued and golden ;
As the mimes of olden
Times she were essaying
Danced with Punchinells.

Houstonias *

(BLUETS)

HALF a dozen Quaker ladies,
Straight and slim and small,
In a sunny Berkshire meadow
By a low stone wall :

"Is thee come to yearly meeting?"
"Yea." "And thee, too?" "Yea."
"Verily, and thee is early!"
"Opens next First Day."

And, in truth, the next May Sabbath
All that meadow fair
Scarce could hold the yearly meeting
Set for session there ;

In their little grey-blue bonnets
Chatting, brim to brim,
Half a million Quaker ladies,
Straight and small and slim.

* Reprinted from *Youth's Companion.*

The Pansy Bed

SAID a little yellow Pansy to a Pansy big and
black :
" They have put so many of us in this bed
That my toes are getting cramped, there 's a sad
crick in my back,
And I really have n't room to turn my head."

Said the Pansy big and black to the yellow Pansy
small :
" Don't fret ; I see young Alice coming out ;
She will take some of us home with her and that
will give us all
A chance to stretch ourselves and look about."

Squirrel-Corn

(BLEEDING-HEART)

HAVE you seen the small coquette
In the hollow of the wood,
With the hearts in order set
All along the slender rood
Piercing through her wigwam's net?
There they dangle, trophy-wise,
Done to death by her bright eyes,
Tender hearts, a-quiver yet.

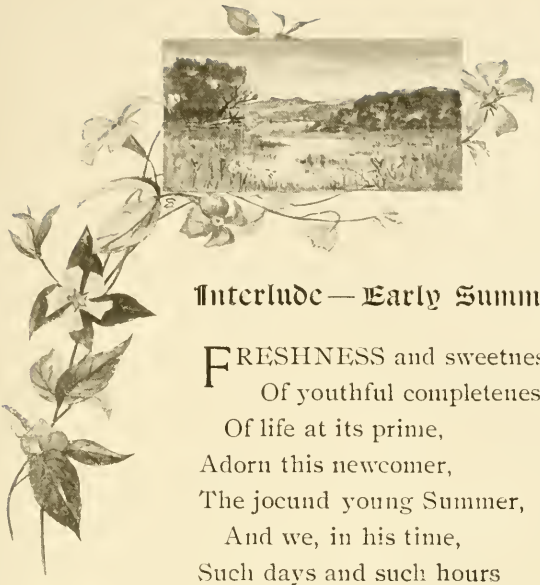
Like the scalp-locks of a chief
One by one she hangs them there
High above the lace-like leaf
Of her tent-flap. So beware
Lest you too may come to grief!
From a savage race she 's sprung,
Many a heart will yet be hung
At her wigwam—have a care!

Apple Blossoms

ROSY clouds upon the trees
Resting, scatter to the breeze,
To the breeze and o'er the ground,
Petalled snowflakes soft and round.
And the new grass murmurs low
" Warm and fragrant is the snow."

When that rosy cloud is gone,
Melted by the nearing sun,
All the branches feel bereft
Knowing not their treasure left.
But the swelling fruit germs know
Whence their birth nor vain the snow.

Thus, with all things, these assever
" Beauty fruitless fadeth never."



Interlude — Early Summer

FRESHNESS and sweetness
Of youthful completeness,
Of life at its prime,
Adorn this newcomer,
The jocund young Summer,
And we, in his time,
Such days and such hours
Know, afield with the flowers,
As 't were well to the chime
Of fair music to fashion
Enwoven in rhyme.

Buttercups

THE Buttercups with shining face
Smile brightly as I pass;
They seem to lighten all the place
Like sunshine in the grass.

And though not glad nor gay was I
When first they came in view,
I find when I have passed them by
That I am smiling too.

Lady's-Slipper

(MOCCASIN-FLOWER)

WHEN the fairy Cinderellas,
Tripping it before their Queen,
Startled by the stroke of midnight,
Fled in haste the moonlit scene,
They their gold and broidered slippers
Left behind them on the green.

Straightway then the elfin pages,
Sent to clear with care away,
Gathering all the scattered slippers,
Hang them up in neat array
Just within the shadowed woodland,
"Where they grow," dull mortals say.

Periwinkle

MY pretty Perry Winkle
Wears a glossy coat and new,
And he has a merry twinkle
In his sunny eyes of blue.

He runs about my garden
With his wild and winning ways ;
Not a " By your leave " or " Pardon,"
When across my beds he strays ;

So, wherever I may turn me,
I have learned without surprise
To meet the merry twinkle
Of my Perry Winkle's eyes.

Forget-Me-Not

A TINY flower with candid eye
Blue and unshadowed as the sky
Looks shyly at the passer-by
In moist and lowly spot ;

As though to say, "Too dim and small
To go with you to bower or hall,
I ask a passing glance, that 's all.
And yet—forget me not !

"Remember, friend, the joy you took
That day you found me by the brook
I love to fringe with blue—your book
Slipped down and was forgot.

"You wrote a letter, then, and laid
My blooms between—in ambuscade—

So gently I was unafraid
And travelled far I wot.

"You know the eyes that next I met
Their glad surprise I 'll not forget.
Thenceforth my place as amulet
Their owner did allot,

"Until we both returned : one day
Within your hands again I lay
And heard *two* voices softly say,
'You did forget me not!' "

Wood Betony

TELL me, O thou fellow-lover
Of the flowers, canst thou discover
As do I, upon this stalk
Which to eyes less fond than ours
Seems to bear but common flowers,
Certain woodland traits and features
Tokening quite other creatures.

Here a beak and here an eye,
Here an eager neck awry
Thrusting forth as if for food,
How they crowd and crane together
All the callow, yellow brood!
Soft! the wise will mock my words,
But canst thou resolve me whether
These are fledgling blooms or blossom birds?

Mountain-Laurel

" BRING me now those rosy lanterns,
Let them be in clusters set
'Gainst the dark wall of the woodland,
Where its shades are thickest met ;
Are they fashioned well and duly—
Beaten work in boss and fret ?
Starry angles measured truly ?—
Master-workman 's clever yet !
Out of rosy wax and snow
He has shaped the dainty things ;
Light them now, that they may glow
Softly on our fairy rings
When to-night the Feast of Lanterns—
Hist — a mortal ! swift — to wings ! "

Thus I overheard the mountain fays
Chatting softly in the mid-June days
Where I loitered 'neath the glossy bays.

Daisies and Iris

WITH their bright faces tied in their tidy white caps
The Daisies went trooping to school,
When they spied a young Iris who cried out: "Perhaps
You will help me get out of this pool!
For I fear I shall find it too cool."

"Now, Iris, we learned but a few days ago,"
The Daisies replied with regret,
"That your great-great-grandame was a rainbow and so
You ought to be fond of the wet;
Besides, it is foolish to fret."

Then the Daisies trooped cheerily on in the sun
While the Iris drew back in the shade;
She let the cold stream 'gainst her green garments run,
And she tossed her blue plumes as she said,
"Just to think that a Daisy can't wade!"

Clover

A LULLABY

CLOVER, Clover, rosy rover
Creeping all the meadow over,
When I see thee shyly peeping
Through the grass, amidst thy leaping
Insect playmates, whilst there hover
Bees anear thee, pink-cheeked Clover,—
Then my gentle fancies claim me
"Baby of the flowers" to name thee.

Sunshine loving, romping baby,
Round about the meadow creeping,
Just above the grass blades peeping,—
Do the shades of evening stay thee?
Do I see thee nodding, may be?
'T is *our* baby's time for sleeping,
And the Katydids croon over
Lullabys for her and Clover.

Herb-Robert

(ROBIN DU BOIS)

"HOW is it, shrinking herb, that thou
Art named for Robin Hood,
The boldest knave that e'er I trow
Went roystering through a wood?"

"An he went roystering through the wood
In merry days agone,
'T was I beside the way who stood
And lookèd him upon.

'I lookèd daily him upon
And watched him draw the bow
And speed the dart, with Little John
And many a good fellow;

"So when my Robin Goodfellow
Went gayly faring by,

I 'd raise my sling of seeds and throw
A valiant cast and high,

" A valiant cast, so swift and high
That he must note my deeds ;
And joy! one day he did me spy
And cried, ' Oho, the weeds

" ' Are archers, too, the doughty weeds ! '
Thus loudly laughèd he.
' Now mark the little sling of seeds
In sooth it shameth me !

" ' For my crossbow it shameth me ';
He stooped him where he stood,
' Wilt comrade mine and namesake be,
Small Robin of the Wood ? ' "

Sweet Peas

A TROOP of gay butterflies lighted one day
On a vine, and when, rested at last,
They spread their bright wings and would fain be away
Its tendrils, they found, held them fast.

So they hung there and swung there and grew so content
With their life of retirement and ease,
That, were they set free now, I think they 'd consent
To stay and be always—Sweet Peas.

Arethusa

ARETHUSA in the marshes,
Thither fled from rash pursuing,
Flushing, trembling, in suspense
Lest I seek and drag her thence,
Finds her beauty her undoing.
Where 's the Alpheus would lose a
Prize so fair as Arethusa ?

Ah, but Arethusa pleadeth :
" I had thought that unmolested
In this poor bog Fate would spare me ;
Mortal, seek not thence to bear me "—
And my hand falls back arrested ;
'T were an ill thing to refuse a
Helpless maid like Arethusa.

Pyrola

I FIND thee by the forest lake
Pyrola, primly holding
Thy wand of bells,
Whose waxen cells
Too coyly stiff appear to shake
A rondel forth
In morning mirth,
Scarce bold enough for tolling
An angelus at eventide
Along the glade and waterside.

But ah, when midnight's witching hour
Is come, thy chimes will tinkle!
Then fairy bands
With linkèd hands
Their maddest measures thro' thy bower
Weave in and out
With song and shout
While stars and fireflies twinkle,
Art still demure and mak'st no sign?
Thy leaves with joy's betrayal shine!

Wild Rose

SHY is she, this pink-cheeked maiden
Peeping through the hedge,
And I hesitate, flower laden,
At the highway's edge.

Should I seek to draw her near me,
Grasp her robes of green,—
She would fear me, she would spear me
With her prickles keen.

So I pass, content this fleeting
Glimpse of her to see,
And to breathe her fragrant greeting
Wafted after me.

Blue-Eyed Grass

TELL me what it is you guard beside the stream,
Little Argus with the hundred azure eyes?
For their mild and wistful blue doth scarcely seem
To be challenging the passer, dragon-wise.

Yet their watch, like that of old, knows no repose;
If, outwearied through a long day's sunny space,
Here and there a tender lid should droop and close,
Straight another, freshly oped, will take its place.

Cinque-Foil and Strawberry

STRAWBERRY Blossom lived up on the hill,
While the Cinque-foils, her cousins,
Who numbered some dozens,
Dwelt, much more obscurely, below by the mill.

Contrasts were many : the Cinque-foils, though poor,
Were five-leaved ; she, triple ;
And when as a cripple
They feigned to regard her, 't was hard to endure.

Snow-white my lady's fair face ; but what use,
When a golfing Cinque-fellow
Said : " Sun-browned or yellow
Complexions alone were the up-to-date hues " ?

Fierce grew the feud, now of " runners " a jibe,
Now of " sepal," now " petal,"

Till straightway to settle
The whole, spake the Rose, lovely Queen of their
tribe :

" Goodly ye both are in flower, leaf, and root ;
But our sister a cherry-
Red, spicy-sweet berry
Possesseth to boot:
Be ye judged by your fruit."

Jewel-Weed

(TOUCH-ME-NOT—LADIES'-EARDROPS)

GOLDEN charms and eardrops,
Pendulous and frail,
Flecked with rich enamel-work—
Are these gems for sale,
Clustered where the shadows lurk
Along the streamlet's trail?

Nay, by common purchase
Never yet were bought
Ornaments of gold like these,
Delicately wrought;
Touch them, and their transient grace,
Fading, leaves you naught.

But, though none such jewels
In her ear may wear,
Though you pass and touch them not,
You may, henceforth, bear
Ownership in this far spot
And all the treasure there.

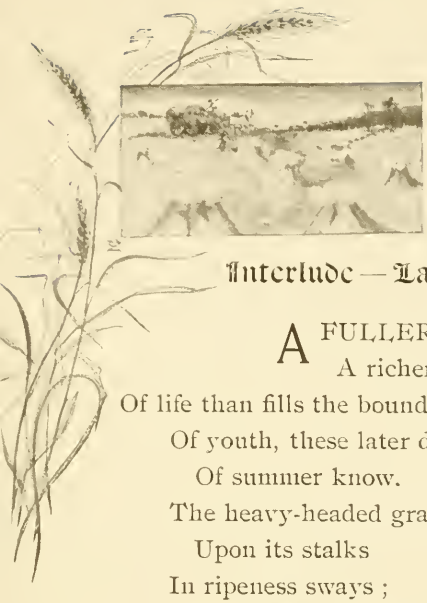
St. John's-Wort

WITCH and goblin, elf and sprite,
Prick and prowl Midsummer's Night.
Venture forth, they 'll plague ye sore,
With their pricks and pranks assail ye ;
Stay within and bar the door,
Bolts and bars will not avail ye.
Elf and goblin, witch and sprite,
Mischief mean, this magic night.

Only one thing will avail :
There 's a plant whereat they quail ;
Gold of flower and green of leaf,
Sacred to St. John, they fear it,
On your lintels bind a sheaf,
They will not, to-night, anear it.
For its golden stars have might

'Gainst each goblin, elf, and sprite,
In the Saint's name, born this night.

Mark it well, this herb of power—
Blade of leaf and edge of flower
  Show in dusky scars old pricks,
    Thickly set, of some malicious
  Elf, who, working vengeful tricks,
    Stabbed it through with art capricious;
For they hate it, herb of might,
Witch and goblin, elf and sprite,
Planning pranks Midsummer Night.



Interlude — Late Summer

A FULLER glow,
A richer strain
Of life than fills the bounding vein
Of youth, these later days
Of summer know.
The heavy-headed grain
Upon its stalks
In ripeness sways ;
The flowers their stateliest show
Along the garden walks
And in the fields maintain.
So fervidly has burned
The harvest sun,
'T were slow discerned
His goal is reached and turned,
His backward course begun.
For all this warmth and colour mock the thought
That life thus at its fullest e'er could wane.

Wild Carrot

(MY LADY'S LACE)

RADIANT sunshine everywhere !
Now you 'll find my Lady's laces
Spread like frostwork, filmy fair,
Over fields and open spaces
For the sun to bleach and whiten
As all lore housewifely pledges.
Each web wrought with daintiest care,
See the tiny mesh-dots brighten
Into wee blooms at its edges !
And the central symbol dark—
Ah, that is my Lady's mark,
As her own the weaves attesting ;
Thus (vain hope !) those thieves arresting
Who might well, a store of laces
Scattered temptingly in reach
All about the fields and places
Where the August sun shall bleach,
Think no harm to be molesting !

Garden Lilies

A STATELY row of maidens tall
Within my garden stood;
And bowed their snowy foreheads all
In gentle sisterhood.

And often as I loitered near,
In joy of their pure grace,
Strains of a chant I seemed to hear,
That breathed about the place.

Perhaps their fragrance memories bore
Of censers, gem-enwrought;
Perhaps their place in sacred lore
Was lurking in my thought;

Howe'er it was, before my band
Of choristers in white,
I loved, at eventime, to stand
And give my fancy flight,

Till, like a row of beings blest,
They seemed above me bent,
And all grew peace within my breast,
And comfort and content.

Tiger Lilies

THERE were flames within the wood,
As we rode that summer day ;
Burning spots and flecks of fire
On the slopes beside the way,—
Showing here and there like blood
'Gainst the sober green and grey
Of the brake and tangled brier.

And each tongue of scarlet flame
Was a lily's heart of fire
Burning out in love and hate—
Smouldering hate and hot desire.
Dew or shower may never tame
That fierce hectic nor abate
Its consuming, till, too late,
With the flame the flower expire.

Yellow Star-Grass

WE watched at night the falling stars ;
And when, at dawn of day,
Along the meadow thick besprent,
These flecks of radiance lay,

We scarce could think they had not come
From out those shining showers,
To flicker, yet unquenched, unspent,
Stars in the grass, not flowers.

Morning-Glory

A PASSION for athletic sports
Once seized upon the flowers;
In twining, climbing, balancing,
They spent the summer hours.

The nimble Morning-glory
Had soon outstripped them all,
He climbed his trellis twice as fast
As Ivy climbed his wall;

And in the early morning
When he felt most fresh and fair
Would swing a hundred clubs and bells
At one time in the air!

Butter-and-Eggs

OUT upon the highway, in the August heat,
Many country lassies one is like to meet,
Bearing on their shoulders curious crocks and kegs
Filled and brimming over with butter and with eggs.

Groups of half a dozen stoutly trudge along,
Balancing their burdens, standing straight and strong,
On their way to market, Millies, Molls, and Megs,
"Who will buy our butter? Who will buy our eggs?"

Indian-Pipe

(GHOST-PLANT)

ONE comes, at times, in some recess
Of dimmest woodland bowers,
Upon a group in ghostly dress,
All mystery and loneliness,
More Phantoms they than flowers.

Close clustering, as they were cold,
They glimmer through the gloom,
In cowl and robe of straightest fold,
As if new risen from the mold
Of some long-perished bloom.

What are they, novice nuns at prayer,
With foreheads meekly bowed?
Flower-spirits, formed of snow and air?
Flower-saints, for judgment waiting there
Each folded in her shroud?

Whate'er they are, disturb them not ;
  Theirs is the woodland right
To stand, unstained, in that still spot,—
A single touch would leave a blot
  Upon their fleckless white.

Robin and Charlie

WHO so mild and good as Creeping Charlie,
Playing gently in his garden-bed?
When across the hedge in sudden parley
Ragged Robin thrusts his tousled head.

"Hi, you house-plant! ain't you allus wishin'
You could join us other fellows some?
Here 's Joe Pye and I are goin' fishin'
Down to Spatterdock's—d' ye want to come?"

If the yellow head was sagely shaken
At the tousled red one, saw not I;
But I know the course *I* would have taken
Had Rob asked *me* jogging staidly by.

Water-Lily

FAIR little ship with a hundred sails
Spread abroad o'er your cargo of gold,
One would think you had come from the isles of the East,
Because of the spices you hold !

But you rock here at anchor from morning to night,
With a fleet of green skiffs in your wake,
And I see the long cables by which you draw up
Your spices and gold from the lake.

Hollyhock

THE stately Lady Hollyhock
Has graced my garden-bed for years,
Sedately stiffened in a frock
All frills and ruffles to her ears ;
For at the fashions one may mock
When one is born a Hollyhock.

Her gay companions creep and twine,
And riot in the summer breeze ;
But she doth haughtily decline
To join in common sports like these ;
Such indecorum needs must shock
A well-bred, well-starched Hollyhock.

" Our family pride will not permit
That we should bend or sway or sprawl ;
We never care to loll nor sit ;
One posture — the erect — is all
Befitting our patrician stock."
So spake my Lady Hollyhock.

Seaweed

THERE are gardens in the sea,
Everywhere,
More freshly fair
Than any nurtured here by you or me.
And along their rocky tiers
Draped with growths of countless years,
Lovely mermaids, gold of hair,
Like our maids for coquetry,
For a maiden's hopes and fears,
Lightly float and flirt with gay mer-cavaliers.

Every branch and leaf and stem
Of these bowers
Transcending ours,
Glows translucently with colour like a gem ;
And their fruits are bladder toys
For the sportive small mer-boys.

And the tide with dreamy powers
All those langurous lengths of stem
Ever ceaselessly deploys
Out and in with rhythmic swing and sway
and poise.

Sunflower

CLYTIE loved the sun, they tell us,—
Him they called the young Apollo—
Stood and gazed and gazed, in Hellas,
Where he climbed the sky's vast hollow,
Turning east and west, with zealous
Eyes, intent his course to follow.

So it was not strange, that, going
Forth to seek the lovelorn starer,
They should find her rooted, growing,
Nor from off the place could tear her,
And departed, inly knowing
That a busy world could spare her.

Oft in some old garden spy we,
Even now, a tall descendant
Of the old-time crazy Clytie,

Gazing at the orb resplendent
Known no more as Phœbus mighty.
From her sun-browned face (lest, pendant,

They should check her ardent staring)
She has pushed the tresses yellow,
Till they form a halo flaring.
'T is an old tale — if despairing
Hearts for Clytie's plight grow mellow,
Pray reflect how very wearing
'T was for Phœbus too, poor fellow !

Great Willow-Herb

(FIREWEED)

WHERE once gloomy forests enshrouded the land,
Phœnix-like, sprung from their ashes, ye stand,
Ye royal-hued blossoms and tall ;
Stand in fair companies, stately and bright,
On the slopes of the mountain and flush it with light,
While ye point to the light over all.

To the light far above and beyond the dim place
That was meted for you at the mountain's broad base,
Pointing steadily on and above ;
" Stay not, press on," ye command as I pass,
" Not thine the lot of the flower or the grass,
The highest was set for thy love."

And the blooms slowly flicker and fade up your
spires
Like sparks, yet unquenched, from those long-ago
fires
Once blighting the fields ye have blessed.
Till the last knop and flower shall have flamed
forth and died
While the pearly-pink embers still pointing abide,
Light my feet, fair flower-lamps, to their Rest.

Trumpet-Flower

"A SCARLET trumpet lined with gold
Must surely merry music hold."

This thought occurred to Humming-Bird
As here and there he poised and whirred ;

Till, thrilling with desire to know
If he this monstrous horn could blow,

He darted near, — then nearer still,
And, thrusting deep his slender bill,

He drew from out the trumpet's throat —
But turned to honey — its sweet note.

Betty and Susan

BOUNCING Betty loitered idly
On the dusty road to town ;
Black-eyed Susan, trim and tidy,
Chid her for her tattered gown:

" See how soiled it is and faded !
Creep beneath the bars, my friend,
In this field 't is clean and shaded,
And your frock I 'll help you mend."

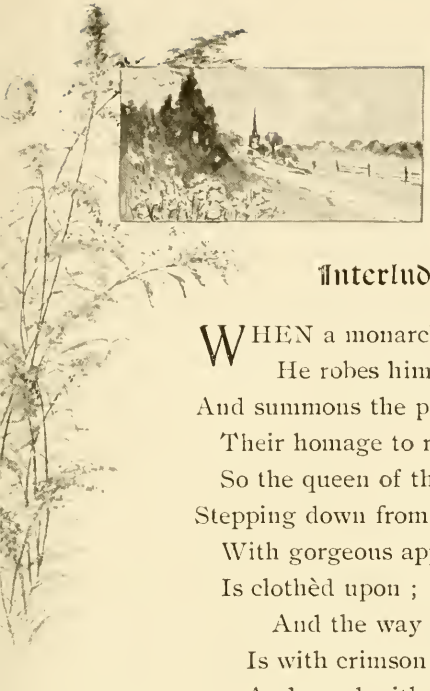
Kindly Susan's plan refusing,
Careless Betty made reply :
" Oh, 't is vastly more amusing
Here to watch the passers-by ! "

Clematis

AN August night ; our neighbour late
In coming from the distant town
Called out while passing by our gate,
"The Milky Way has drifted down."

Whereat we laughed incredulous.
"Come, then," said he, "and prove me true,"
And in the warm dusk showed to us
What held his dreamy poet's view.

It lay along the pasture bars
And softly glimmered through the gloom,
A mass of undistinguished stars
A Milky Way in truth,—of bloom.



Interlude — Autumn

WHEN a monarch would make abdication,
He robes him in splendour,
And summons the peers of the nation
Their homage to render.
So the queen of the earth,
Stepping down from her throne,
With gorgeous apparel
Is clothèd upon ;
And the way that she goes
Is with crimson and gold overhung;
And royal with purple
The flowers ever loyal
She passes among.
Never fairer the scene
Of her reign than when now she departs
Through the splendour and glow
Of a beauty whose joy in our hearts
Is the legacy left by our queen.

Cardinal-Flower

IN the marsh beyond the willows they have lit the ruddy torches
That proclaim the Autumn's coming — budded brands that bloom in fire ;
And the trees take up the signal flaming forth in gold and scarlet,
And a silence wakes the humming of the message on the wire.

'T is the pause of golden days before the scene shall be dismantled,
A still carnival of colour ere the winter fasts austere ;
And these glowing brands — the *voyageurs* of old, perchance more aptly,
Named them "Cardinals"; no duller robe may speak the blessing here.

Brunella

(HEAL-ALL)

TRUE, Doctor Brunella is awkward,
His clothing is always awry,
He fails to attract much attention,
Because he is short and is shy.

But he who to slight him refuses
Finds delicate charm in his face ;
And his fame as a healer of bruises
Is dear to our poor, stumbling race.

Marshmallow

I PAUSED with foot uncertain
Upon the marsh's brink ;
A flower its petal curtain
Of lovely roseate pink
Was spreading just beyond my hand ;—
Ah, *would* I sink—
Or *could* I stand ?

"Why lavish here such splendour,
O Mallow ? Why this sheen
Of silken stuffs in tender
Emboss of rose and green ?
Thus sumptuously a bog to grace!
To look a queen
And brook this place !"

" And shouldst thou bear me thither,
O Mortal, robes like these

Of mine would crease and wither,
My velvet prove but frieze ;
None of us may but in her sphere
Achieve to please,
So leave me here."

Nasturtiums

TROUPS of tiny warriors,
Bound for conquest all,
From their green encampment
Start to scale my wall.

Great round shields they brandish
In their valiant hold ;
Gay their curving helmets,
Copper, bronze, and gold.

Swiftly moving upward,
Grasping anything,
See the bright-hued squadrons
Sway and climb and cling !

Closed Gentian

DAME Nature must have lisped one day
To these closed buds some secret fair,
Then given earnest charge that they
Should keep her council with all care ;
For, ever since, they seem to say,
Through pursed-up lips—each purple bell—
" Whate'er we hold of rich and rare,
We 'll never tell, no, never tell ! "

And when I see this Momus-band
Erectly grouped—a finger-tip,
As from a green, encircling hand
Laid lightly on each tight-closed lip,—
I 'd fain their caution understand.
Yet if, some day, a weary bell
Should yawn and let the secret slip
Where I o'erheard, I 'd serve them well,
And never tell, no, never tell.

Solomon's Seal

I KNOW he wears a dangling row
Of yellow bells and dusky balls
All up and down his slender vest.
And once I thought that what he calls
His Seal hung there among the rest.
But when I sought to find it so
I met a gesture of rebuff,
As who should say, "Oh yes, they 're real,
And pretty little charms enough,
But none of them The Seal!"

O wary little Solomon!
Whenever documents of state,
Or cases you have passed upon
Your final signature await,
(As "*Gentian versus Campion*,"
Or "*Judgment in the Buds' Debate*,"
I fancy 't is at dead of night,
No fussy clerklings at your heel,
That by the fireflies' flickering light,
You raise, and set, The Seal.

The Asters and the Golden-Rod

RIGHT wealthy is the Golden-rod,
A very Crœsus he ;
The widowed, weeping Asters came
To crave his charity.

He gave them each a piece of gold,
Yellow and round and bright ;
They clasped it in their purple robes,
And beamed their deep delight.

Then Golden-rod with stately nod
And glowing features cried,
" Come every fall, and with you all
My gold will I divide! "

Milkweed

MASTER Milkweed keeps a dairy
By the river side,
And above project his airy
Storerooms, arched and wide.

Here he stores his creamy cheeses
Soft and smooth as silk,
Thinks he 'll find them when he pleases,—
But this magic milk

Some fine day will change to fairies
Who, on gauzy wing,
Flying far, will start new dairies
For another spring.

The Origin of the Cat-Tails

THE Cat-tails were holding their annual convention
Of all local clubs, and they rustled and purred
Of " heredity," " tendencies," " degeneration,"
And similar themes—far too puzzling to word;—

Till one slender Tail of pronounced peccadilloes
Spoke thus: " Madame Chairman, I 've found out one thing—
Cat-tails are evolved from the small Pussy Willows
That lived round this swamp in the long-ago spring!"

Thistle

WHAT stabs and stings, what barbèd spite
Against a friendly human hand!
This stiffly bristling armament
Of hate, 't is hard to understand.
For on that prickly tower alight
The little finches soft of plume;
The burly bee belligerent
Rifles, unchecked, its purple bloom;
Here rest the weary butterflies,
And fearless preen their fragile wings;
While man, the mighty one, the wise,
Alone is driven off with stings.

Yet brave the heart that grants the weak
And small its succour, shelters song,
Shares of its sweetness, will not wreak
Its petulance, itself defend

Save only 'gainst the wise and strong !
'T is such I 'd choose to have as friend.
So when within my field I see
The browsing cattle calmly crop
Those armoured leaves repulsing me
I feel aggrieved that Thistletop
Must needs so misanthropic be.

The Walking Fern

(A STUDY IN IDENTITY)

"IF plants should try to walk about"
The Royal Fern surmised.
"Confusion would result, no doubt,
Else why were roots devised?"

Whereat a listener by her side
With sudden zest did burn:
"I'll put it to the test," he cried,
"I'll be a walking fern!"

Then forth he stretched a slender foot
And took a step with care;
Lo, where its tip but touched a root
Struck down and held him there.

Again he started—zealous wight—
And up the cliff would go,
But tread as softly as he might,
New roots were sure to grow.

And when with many a weary stop
And start, with head that swam
But heart still stout he reached the top
And shouted "Here I am,"

A voice from far below replied
"Nay, here you are," and "Here,"
"Nay, here" all up the cliff's green side
Came voices. Smit with fear

He peers beneath. A chain of ferns
Marks out the pathway where
He climbed and he in each discerns
Himself still rooted there.

"Now woe is me! If I," said he
"Am you then who am I?"
"We each are you, you still are we,"
His old selves made reply.

"Let plants not try to walk about"
The Royal Fern decreed,
"For such attempts, as we 've found out
To dire confusion lead."

Sea-Lavender

(ROSEMARY—SEA-SPRAY)

MANY a happy hour for me
Here on the rocks at the end of the beach,
With the sea's salt breath in my face and the sleet
Of its spray, whose wind-fringed edges reach
To this little plant at my feet.
Ros-marinus, Spray of the Sea,
I share the freshness of life with thee!

Many a restless hour will be
In the sultry town; let me garner the breath
Of the brine, in plucking this herb—renew
All the joy of the place that nourisheth
Its mist-pale bloom in the soft sea-dew.
Ros-marinus, Spray of the Sea,
Be for remembrance, I pray, to me!

A Legend of the Leaves

A CHIEF whose life had failed in naught,
Dying, of Manitou besought

That, each twelfth moon, his tribe might come,
Revisiting their ancient home,

And through its forests roam at will.
'T was thus decreed. And in the still

Autumnal days, a noiseless throng
Moveth, unseen, the woods among.

And where the children pass, the low
Glad bushes first are seen to glow,

The while the squaws, who follow near,
Have touched the sumac leaves to clear

Red flame ; and youths and maidens brush
The tender vines till straight they blush

With love's own hue ; and then, anon,
A crowd of braves come pressing on

And at their tread, like torches burn
The maples ; but the oaks will turn

To sombre beauty only when
Their peers draw near — the agèd men.

Thus splendidly the forests glow
With camp-fires lit to Manitou.

And round the sky a low, soft haze
Spreads, while we say "The golden days

Of Indian Summer fill the land,"
Nor that we say half understand.

The Voyage of the Seeds

WHITHER away under feathery sails,
Fleet little airships, O whither away?
Now dreamily drifting, now skimming the gales,
What is the port you are seeking alway?
And what is the cargo you bear to that harbour?
Pray count me your treasure of bales.

An anchorage secret and safe do we seek,
And our gossamer sails shall be furled
In earth's treasure caves ere the tempests grow bleak
For we carry the hopes of a world,
A fair world of summer, the bales that we number
On each tiny keelson empearled.

Mullein Towers

GOOD Mother Mullein's house is hung
With warmest stuffs around ;
Soft eider flannel clothes the walls,
And woolly rugs abound.

Her children in their nursery tower
Are wrapped and swaddled deep
In blankets, till their yellow heads
Can scarce above them peep.

And this in June and hot July ;
No wonder in the fall
The little Mulleins shake and cry
And can't keep warm at all.

And when their tower stands grim and bare
Amid December's snow
We know they 've gone to winter where
The birds and sick folk go.

Interlude — Winter

THE flowers have left their withered stalks
And snow-encompassed lie the walks
That once we gayly shared.
A few green shrubs that dot the snow,
Some gaunt-stemmed berries still aglow,—
Else lonely have I fared.

Now must we seek in bower or hall,
Or from some garnered spray recall
The themes to grace our rhymes ;
Or find, in walks of wider range,
New friendships beautiful and strange
With flowers of other climes.

Bittersweet

HOW potent is this clustered fruit
To cheer the days when life is mute
And frosts lie hoary !

For, in the scarlet and the gold,
The wealth of June we still behold,
And autumn's glory;

And round the withered berries cling
Faint odours, breathing of the spring
A subtle story.

Cyclamen

THE fairies were playing at shuttlecock
In those plants by my window last night;
Up in the air the blossoms they knock,
Up in the air a feathered flock,
Crimson and rose and white.

I could not see them,—they made no sound;
"Then how do I know they were there?"
Because the dark spots on the leaves I have found,
Where fairy feet scampered gayly around,
And, see! the flowers dance yet in air.

Two Legends of the Orange Tree

I

WHEN, long ago, in Ida's grove
Venus for beauty's prize contested,
And from the lovely twain who strove
With her the golden apple wrested,

Well pleased, the goddess took the tree
That bore such fruitage into favour,
Breathed on it grace and symmetry,
And gave it blooms of sweetest savour ;

" Henceforth, at marriage feasts," she cried,
" Where I, love's patron, sit presiding,
The flowers that deck the happy bride
Shall be, O tree, of thy providing."

II

Swiftly descending,
Joyously bending earthward their flight,
The Angel of Bridals' white pinions brushed softly
A tree, as, low wending,
They waved to alight.
And straightway it burst into bloom,
White, radiant ; with rarest perfume
The glad air was laden ;
The leaves of the tree shone with bliss.
Said the angel, " A garland of this
Will I bear to the maiden
Whose pure heart I visit to-night.
Thou, tree, as thy blossoming blessed
Be thy fruiting, rich, golden, complete,
That both as a symbol be mete
Of the blooming and fruitage of love
Quickened thus from above."
Then onward the bright herald pressed.

Yellow Jessamine

CLOSE thronged palmettoes, live-oaks draped
With waving veils of sad grey moss ;
A tropic maze of things misshaped
And shapes that show decay and loss.
It saddens me,
When suddenly
A gleam of sunshine glints across.

Only a slender thread of vine
With clustered bells of yellow set,
Yet where they twine, the palm and pine
And tangled thicket their gloom forget ;
And the place shall be
In my memory
The place where that fragrance of bloom I met.

Some souls there are like the Jessamine flowers
In the tangled maze of this life of ours.

The Hymn of the Palm-Tree

RESTLESS the grace of the stately palm
In these isles of the southern sea,
For the winds of balm
That are never at rest
Shake ever the calm
Of its feathery crest ;
And the long plumes rustling ceaselessly,
Whisper of " mystery, mystery."

Mystery brooding the centuries slow
That builded these coral isles,
Where the waters glow
Through a sapphire range,
And strange fruits grow
From a leafage strange ;
Mystery potent that life beguiles
From the body of death with its age-long wiles.

Sparkles the sky and the gem-like sea
And rises the column slim
Of the crested tree ;
And the grace of it all
And the mystery
Holds my spirit in thrall.
And I grope for a voice in the rustling dim
Of the wind-stirred palm leaves ; and this their
hymn :

THE HYMN

" Toilers obscure
Refuse not their task ;
Obedience sure,
Unwitting its goal,
Essays not to ask ;
They build to endure
On the sites of the sea,
Then die patiently
With none to extol.

Cycles — a day
In God's plans — pass away,
Lo, beauty the crown of the whole !
I, the Palm,
Sing the psalm
Of the creatures who made me
And beauty to be ;
Thou, man, take their faith to thy soul ! ''

California Poppies

'T IS the time of the poppies ;
The fields are aflame ;
And looking down
From the mountain crown
The way whence we came,
At the cañon's mouth lie acres unrolled,
Glowing and gleaming with molten gold.

No clouds to pale them,
No rain to dim
The velvety gloss
Of each cup's emboss,
Perfect from rim to rim ;
'T is a sun-blessed land that riots in bloom,
Shadowless, fearless of storm or gloom.

They tell of a tourney
Of pomp and pride,

Of the furnishings
Of a field where kings
Splendidly vied;
But what could rival in days of old
This Field resplendent of Cloth of Gold?

The far-off shining
Of wealth like this,
Was it that lured
Men hither, assured
Of treasure? I wis
'T were a goodly store, could their delving yield
A tithe of the riches of this fair field.

Baby Blue Eyes

OUT of the sand and the sun glare
Into some shaded nook,—
The fern-draped aisle of a cañon,
The sheltered ways of a brook,—
And straightway, as lonely thus long without me,
The Baby Blue Eyes come crowding about me.

Deep as the sombre sapphire,
Pale as the azure skies,
Of a varying hue, but clear and true,
Is the gaze of those innocent eyes ;
And well might the bosom some wrong concealing
Turn with a pang from their soft appealing.

Thronging the steps of the stranger,
Blossoms with eyes that bless,
I stoop to your tender greeting
As though to a child's caress ;
And your weak little stem to my fondling lingers
With the clinging clasp of a baby's fingers.

Holly

WHEN the fairy elves and the fairy queen
Polish the holly and give to its green
The gloss and the glow of a Christmas sheen
Its prickles do prick them sorely.

But they weep not their wounds, they laugh instead,
For the drops of the fairy blood they shed
Are changed into berries round and red,
To brighten the holly's glory.

Cherokee Rose

OH, the rose that blooms at Christmas !
Have you seen its petals fair—
Pure as heart of Mary Mother,
Pure as maid or babe might wear ?
Only lands that liken Edens
May its tender grace sustain ;
Only lie its fragrant snowdrifts
Where the snow has never lain.

Happy rose that blooms at Christmas—
At the season when on earth,
Human hopes and aspirations
Have a new and holy birth !
Oh, that these too might no frost-time
For their pure unfolding know,
But in hearts kept warm and faithful
To a perfect beauty grow !

Mistletoe

A SONG of the Mistletoe, oh, ho, ho !
Come hither, my lads and my lasses,
And hang me aloft where the lights are aglow
And the tides of the music and merriment flow ;
There 's a toll from the first one who passes below,
From the lips of the first one who passes.

A song of the Mistletoe, oh, ho, ho !
'T is a plant that is olden in story :
I decked for the Druid his victim's last throe,
To Baldur a death-shaft I sped from the bow,
Not a tribute that 's mine am I wont to forego ;
Behold me, the Mistletoe hoary !

A song of the Mistletoe, oh, ho, ho !
Comes Yule-tide, then *I* am the master ;
'T is a kiss from each lass, and the lads are not slow
To gather my tithings for me, oh, no, no !
So what recks the night and the thick falling snow —
We 'll feast, and we 'll frolic the faster !

Everlasting

A FLOWER of pearl, it knows not change,
But, plucked from off its native hill,
Where sunlight bathes and breezes range,
And thrown on places parched and strange,
Its life and fragrance linger still.

Thus dauntless, too, its kinsfolk are,
That spring from out the snows and gloom
Of highest Alps ; frosts cannot mar
The " noble whiteness " of their star
Nor check its constancy of bloom.

And when " What image will you bring,"
My friend to me in challenge saith,
" To liken to this deathless thing
That heeds no winter, needs no spring ? "
I make reply, " It likens Faith."

Postlude

NOW thanks to you, my comrade flowers,
For all the joyance you have brought me,
For all the lessons you have taught me,
Through long and happy hours
Of this blithe year.

My love for you has wrought these verses,
Whose vagrant course our way rehearses,
As we have walked and talked together
In fair or sombre weather
And found good cheer.

And somewhat in my heart presages,
Since your bright names adorn these pages,
However slight their further aim,
They needs must gentle usance claim,
Nor worthless quite appear.

JUN 7 1909

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